

# Delta Counties Coalition

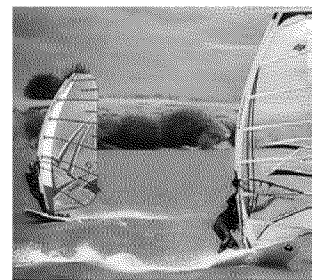
## The Delta Counties Coalition (DCC)

The DCC is an alliance of the California Counties of Contra Costa, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano and Yolo. They work collaboratively to give one voice to the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta (Delta) and its 4 million area-wide residents and advocate to achieve three goals: improve the Delta ecosystem, provide a more reliable water supply for the State, and protect and enhance Delta communities. The DCC stands ready to work with federal agencies, congressional members and others to develop and implement solutions that address Delta issues in a comprehensive, sustainable manner.

## The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Facts at a Glance

*The Delta is a vibrant ecosystem which supports diverse fish and wildlife species, robust agriculture, maritime commerce, and passionate recreational enthusiasts.*

- It is the most extensive inland delta in the world and the largest estuary on the Pacific Coast of the Americas.
- It provides water to over 25 million people in the State and irrigation for 750,000 acres of agricultural lands.
- It is home to nearly 4 million Delta County residents, including 2,500 farmers that contribute \$2 billion to California's economy each year.
- It supplies water to over 500,000 acres of California prime farmland, which is the Delta's dominant land use composing 75% of the region's landscape.
- Its rich physical and chemical characteristics and reliable irrigation make Delta agriculture's per acre yields almost 50% higher than the State's average.
- It provides habitat for more than 500 species of plants and wildlife, including dozens of endangered species.
- It supports the largest nursery for CA fisheries and the largest Pacific Coast fly over stop for migrating waterfowl.
- It has approximately 60 islands that are protected by 1,100 miles of levees.
- It offers recreational opportunities to the two million Californians that visit the Delta each year for boating, fishing, hunting and viewing wildlife.



**The DCC advocates for a statewide water solution that includes** Water system operation improvements/conveyance, regional self-reliance, levee improvements, storage, and restoring the Delta.

# Delta Counties Coalition Principles

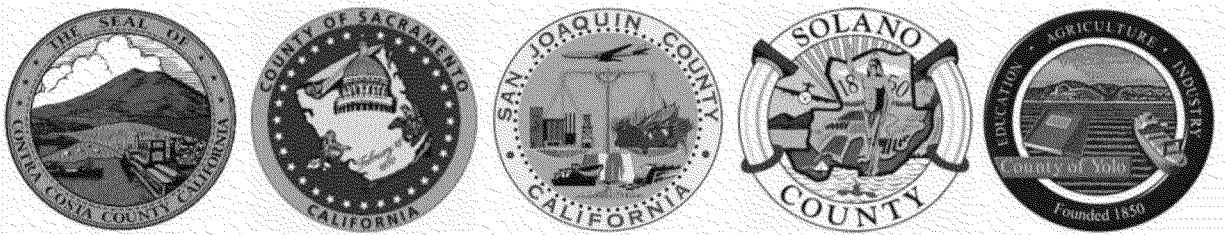
The Delta Counties Coalition, a consortium of five Delta Counties, including Contra Costa, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano, and Yolo, is working to give one voice to the Delta, advocating on behalf of local government and the 4 million people throughout the Delta region. These principles describe the Delta Counties' joint interests in the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta and Greater Bay Delta Estuary.

The Delta Counties Coalition believes that the management of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta and greater Bay Delta Estuary must:

1. Protect and improve water quality and water quantity in the Delta region and maintain appropriate Delta outflow for a healthy estuary;
2. Protect the existing water right priority system and legislative protections established for the Delta;
3. Respect and safeguard Delta Counties' responsibilities related to land use, water resources, flood management, tax revenues, public health and safety, economic development, agricultural stability, recreation, and environmental protection in any projects, policies, or operations;
4. Represent and include local government in any governance structures for the Delta;
5. Protect, enhance, and preserve the Delta's agricultural economic viability, the ongoing vitality of its communities, and its historical significance;
6. Support rehabilitation, improvement, and maintenance of levees throughout the Delta;
7. Support the Delta pool concept, in which the common resource provides quality freshwater supply to all Delta users, requiring mutual responsibility to maintain, restore, and protect the common resource;
8. Support immediate improvements to through-Delta conveyance;
9. Require that any water conveyance plan for the Delta is aligned with these principles and supported by clearly demonstrated improvement to the entire state's water management;
10. Protect and restore the Delta ecosystem and provide for a healthy estuary in perpetuity by ensuring adequate water supply and quality, enhancing Delta fisheries, and managing or eradicating invasive species;
11. Include the study and implementation of storage options, sustainable groundwater management and conjunctive use, conservation, recycling, reuse, and regional self-sufficiency as part of an improved statewide flood management and water supply system, which will reduce reliance on the Delta as called for in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Reform Act of 2009;
12. Support conservation actions aligned with these principles and the habitat plans and programs of each Delta County.



**Delta Counties Coalition**  
Contra Costa County · Sacramento County · San Joaquin County · Solano County · Yolo County  
*"Working together on water and Delta issues"*



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## Delta Counties Coalition Directory

### Contra Costa County

#### Supervisors

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Karen Mitchoff, Supervisor, District 4, 925-521-7100, [karen.mitchoff@bos.cccounty.us](mailto:karen.mitchoff@bos.cccounty.us)

#### Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) member

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#### Technical Advisory Committee member (TAC)

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#### DCC Supervisors

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#### Technical Advisory Committee member (TAC)

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### **Delta Counties Coalition**

Contra Costa County · Sacramento County · San Joaquin County · Solano County · Yolo County

*"Working together on water and Delta issues"*

## Solano County

### DCC Supervisors

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### Director, Department of Resource Management

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### Technical Advisory Committee member (TAC)

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### DCC Supervisors

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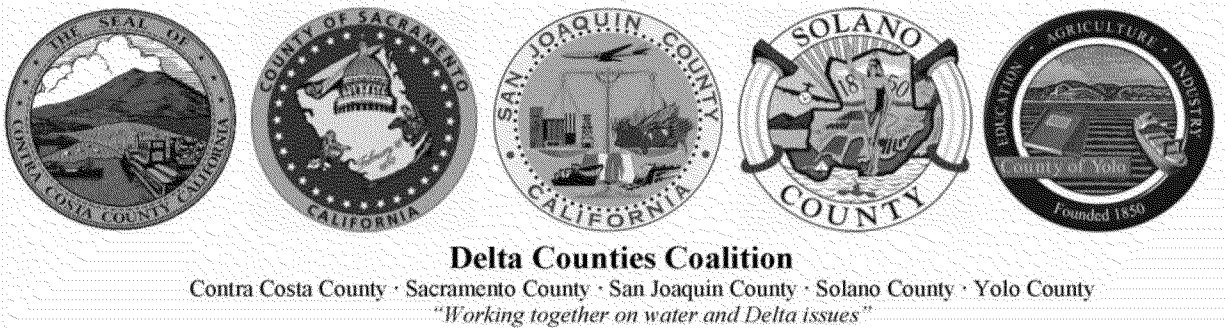
Oscar Villegas, Supervisor, District 1, 916-375-6440, [oscar.villegas@yolocounty.org](mailto:oscar.villegas@yolocounty.org)

### Technical Advisory Committee member (TAC)

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[Alexander.Tengolics@yolocounty.net](mailto:Alexander.Tengolics@yolocounty.net)

Coordinator, Delta Counties Coalition: Natasha Drane, 916-874-4627, [DraneN@saccounty.net](mailto:DraneN@saccounty.net)



December 11, 2015

To: Delta Congressional Representatives

From: Delta Counties Coalition

Subject: Comments on the Recirculated Draft Environmental Impact Report/Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement prepared for the California WaterFix

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Counties of Contra Costa, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Solano, and Yolo, working together as the Delta Counties Coalition (DCC), hereby transmit to you the detailed technical comments prepared by each of the counties on the Recirculated Draft Environmental Impact Report/Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (RDEIR/SDEIS) prepared for the "California WaterFix" (formerly the BDCP). These written comments were provided to the applicable State and Federal lead agencies on or prior to the October 30, 2015 submittal deadline.

Despite its rebranded moniker, the "WaterFix" does not "fix" the overarching scientific, environmental, and public policy problems associated with the BDCP, and the ultimate goal of the project remains unchanged: the continued siphoning of Delta water supplies for the benefit of south of Delta agricultural and urban interests. This is a source of great concern to the Delta counties and their constituents.

Like the BDCP DEIR/DEIS, the recirculated/supplemental environment documents prepared for the WaterFix are fatally flawed. Both the current and previous preferred alternatives are unacceptable policy choices because they: (1) rely on flawed hydrologic modeling and erroneous, incomplete, and biased scientific analysis; (2) impose a disproportionate burden on Delta County residents and the local environment for a project designed to benefit agricultural and urban water users south of the Delta; and (3) fail to demonstrate that such impacts will be sufficiently mitigated. With its repeated, fundamentally defective environmental review and scientific support, the WaterFix proposal remains an unjustified and deceptive strategy that will fail to achieve the Delta Reform Act's mandated coequal goals.

The DCC's September 2014 correspondence to Delta Congressional Representatives identified a number of significant flaws in the environmental analysis supporting the BDCP. The

environmental documentation prepared for the WaterFix only perpetuates these deficiencies. Specifically, the RDEIR/SDEIS still fails to:

- ☐ Meet the basic requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) or the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to appropriately inform the public of the direct, indirect, and cumulative environmental impacts anticipated with project implementation;
- ☐ Include a reasonable range of project alternatives;
- ☐ Rely on/use the best available science;
- ☐ Identify a viable financing strategy;
- ☐ Include sufficient project details to appropriately assess anticipated environmental impacts;
- ☐ Ensure compliance with water quality regulations and standards;
- ☐ Ensure the protection of threatened and endangered species as required by the State and federal Endangered Species Acts;
- ☐ Reduce reliance on the Delta as required by the 2009 Delta Reform Act; and
- ☐ Include a governance structure that ensures the public and those directly affected by the project in the Delta are appropriately represented in the decision making.

A single-minded pursuit of isolated conveyance constrains the WaterFix proposal from the outset. Just as troubling, the documents and analysis provided to date simply do not provide sufficient information to allow the public a meaningful opportunity to understand and comment on this project's substantial adverse impacts. Yet the project proponents have decided to compound this problem by relying on the flawed RDEIR/SDEIS as they push to obtain additional permits and authorizations for the project from a host of other Federal and State agencies, including a Clean Water Act section 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, a change petition to the State Water Resources Control Board, and federal and state Endangered Species Act consultations.

It is time for the project proponents to abandon this flawed environmental review process in favor of a more comprehensive approach to water supply issues. At the very least, the RDEIR/SDEIS must be revised extensively and recirculated for public review. We strongly encourage our Congressional representatives to advocate not only for this revision and recirculation, but also for a halt to all other Federal and State permitting processes until the project proponents have provided environmental documentation for WaterFix that appropriately addresses the deficiencies identified in the attached comments.

The DCC appreciates your ongoing efforts in advocating for a workable water solution in the Delta, and we look forward to working with you to ensure that the State and federal governments

comply with the statutory requirements of NEPA and CEQA. If you have any questions regarding our comments on the WaterFix RDEIR/SDEIS, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



Mary Nejedly Piepho  
Supervisor, Contra Costa County



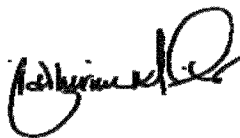
Skip Thomson  
Supervisor, Solano County



Don Nottoli  
Supervisor, Sacramento County



Jim Provenza  
Supervisor, Yolo County



Katherine M. Miller  
Supervisor, San Joaquin County

#### Attachments

Link to each county's response (to expire in 180 days after 3-11-16):

<https://eftsweb.saccounty.net:443/~svc-efts/eftsattach/deborde/20160311112149w6xlkxbyLoA/index.shtml>





***Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta & the “California Water Fix” (Alt #4A)***  
***Facts and Figures***  
***March 2016***

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**General Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Factoids**

- ☐ The Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta is 700,000 acres in size; or, approximately 1,100 square miles. For comparison purposes the State of Rhode Island is 1,200 square miles in size.
- ☐ The Delta consists of 70 islands or tracts (approx.) that are protected from flooding by more than 1,100 miles of levees.
- ☐ Largest estuary on the west coast of North and South America.
- ☐ Generates \$800M in agriculture-related revenues annually; the value added figure for the 5-Delta counties is closer to \$1.4B.
- ☐ Recreation-related spending in the Delta amounts to \$312M.
- ☐ 1 cubic foot of water = 7.5 gallons
- ☐ 1 acre-foot of water = 325,851 gallons

**A California WaterFix 101**

The proposed CA WaterFix is nine years in the works and is being co-administered by the U.S. Department of the Interior (Reclamation) and the California Natural Resources Agency (State DWR). A summary description of the proposed plumbing infrastructure consists of the following:

The proposed CA WaterFix is nine years in the works and is being co-administered by the U.S. Department of the Interior (Reclamation) and the California Natural Resources Agency (State DWR).

- ☐ The WaterFix proposes to irreversibly change, and in many instances, permanently destroy the generations-old socioeconomic fabric and physical landscape of the Delta.
- ☐ Constructing massive twin tunnels won't produce any more water, but make no mistake, it will leave a legacy of negative impacts on the Delta, its economy and its people.
- ☐ The WaterFix doesn't solve California's water management problems nor helps to address the Delta's degrading ecosystem. Simply put, it's an example of poor public policy that sacrifices the Delta to benefit others.....this is not an acceptable approach.
- ☐ The 10-12 year construction period (as estimated for the twin tunnels) will result in major negative impacts to the lives of Delta residents, the local and regional economy, and its irreplaceable natural resources.
- ☐ Folsom Lake is crucial not only with respect to regional water supplies, but the entire State's. Past modeling conducted for the BDCP/WaterFix found that if the Plan is implemented, Folsom Reservoir could go to “dead pool” approximately once every ten years. In this "dead pool" scenario, significant urban populations in Sacramento, Placer and El Dorado counties – including Granite Bay and the cities of Folsom and Roseville – would be essentially cut off from critical surface water supplies for several months. This would devastate the region's economy, devalue property and likely lead to depopulation of cities. It would also ultimately devastate the same environment that the CA WaterFix/EcoRestore is looking to restore -- the San Francisco- San Joaquin Bay Delta. These economic and environmental impacts would not only harm the Sacramento Region, but also harm the entire state.

***Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta & the “California Water Fix” (Alt #4A)***  
***Facts and Figures***  
***March 2016***

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**Other Significant Impacts**

1. Agriculture and direct/indirect impacts to existing legacy communities from long-term construction activities and project operations;
2. Uncertainties surrounding future water project operations and how these operations will impact water supplies;
3. Impacts to the roadway/transportation network from construction activities;
4. Impacts from the conversion of agricultural land to habitat;
5. Economic and social impacts to the local Delta communities from the long term displacement of businesses and residents
6. Impacts to Airport operations; and,
7. Impacts from changes to drainage pattern changes resulting from project construction.

**What’s Missing from the Process to Date:**

- ☐ The proposal is merely a re-plumbing of the system, with NO guarantee of “new” water;
- ☐ No certainty that the proposed “adaptive management” approach to future operations will actually “fix” the Delta and ensure for a reliable water supply for the State, while at the same time restoring/protecting the Delta’s ecosystem;
- ☐ No/little substantive local input on proposed strategies;
- ☐ No long-term protections of existing water rights; and
- ☐ No mitigation for the potential loss/destruction of a generational-old and billion dollar agricultural industry located in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

**The CA Water Fix by the Numbers:**

A summary description of the proposed plumbing infrastructure consists of the following:

**North Delta Intakes and Forebay**

- ☐ Three (3) 3,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) intakes (Nos. 2, 3, & 5) will be located on the east side of the Sacramento River, roughly between the Delta legacy community of Clarksburg (Yolo County) and Randall Island Road (see the attached map).
- ☐ Each intake site will be approximately 90 acres in size (footprint) and will take 3.5 to 4.5 years to complete, with some simultaneous facility construction anticipated.
- ☐ Construction of each facility will require the replacement of existing levees with new setback levees along with dredging and channel modification activities.
- ☐ Intake structures will range in height from 20-30 feet above the surface of the river. Surge tower/vents could be as high as 65-70 feet from the river’s surface.
- ☐ In non-technical terms, the 3 intakes/pumps operating at full capacity could divert enough water to fill an area approximately the size of a football field, to a depth of 6-feet, in approximately 30 seconds.
- ☐ A 37-acre intermediate forebay will be constructed just north of Twin Cities Road, between the legacy communities of Courtland and Locke in Sacramento County, with a water storage capacity of 750-ac/ft. The construction footprint of this facility is much larger, at 243 acres.

***Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta & the “California Water Fix” (Alt #4A)***  
***Facts and Figures***  
***March 2016***

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**Tunnels**

- ☐ Single-bore tunnels (28-foot inside diameter) will carry water from each intake to the 37-acre forebay.
- ☐ Twin 40-foot (inside diameter) tunnels will transport water (via gravity flow) from the intermediate forebay 44 miles to the existing/redesigned Clifton Court forebay.

**Expanded Clifton Court Forebay**

- ☐ Clifton Court Forebay would be expanded to the south and would be dredged to provide additional storage capacity. The north cell would receive water pumped from the north Delta through the proposed tunnels, while the south cell would receive water conveyed through the existing through Delta system. The north cell water surface area would be approximately 850 acres, while the south cell would have a water surface area larger than approximately 1,700 acres. This represents an expansion of approximately 600 acres.

**Tunnel Muck (aka: Reusable Tunnel Material)**

- ☐ Muck consists of a plasticized mix consisting of soil cuttings, air, water, and soil conditioning agents such as foams, polymers, and bentonite.
- ☐ Numerous tunnel muck (RTM) storage sites, totaling 2,600 acres.
- ☐ Daily volume of muck transported from tunnel to drying/chemical treatment areas is 6,000 cubic yards per day by trucks running 24 hours per day, seven days a week.
- ☐ A total of 30.7 million cubic yards of muck will be excavated and stored in 10 -15 foot high piles.

**Barges/Unloading Areas**

- ☐ Six (6) river barge unloading facilities/docks for the delivery of construction materials (e.g., tunnel segments, batched concrete, major equipment) will be constructed located at: 1) Venice Island, 2) Bacon Island, 3) Bouldin Island, 4) Mandeville Island, 5) Glanville Tract, and 6) Clifton Court.

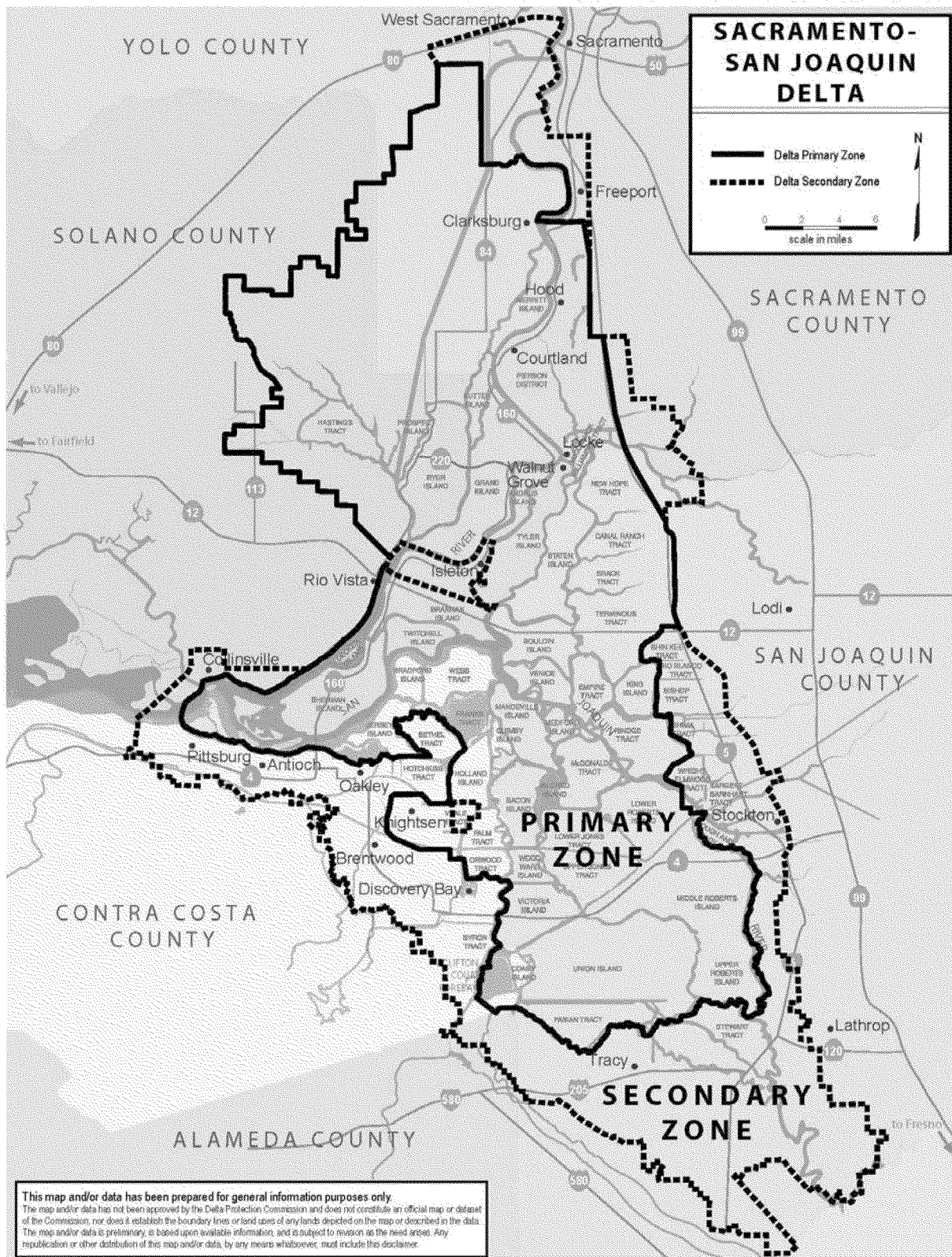
**Concrete Batch Plants**

- ☐ Six (6) concrete plants with adjacent fueling stations will be constructed along the tunnel alignment, each between 1 and 40 acres in size.

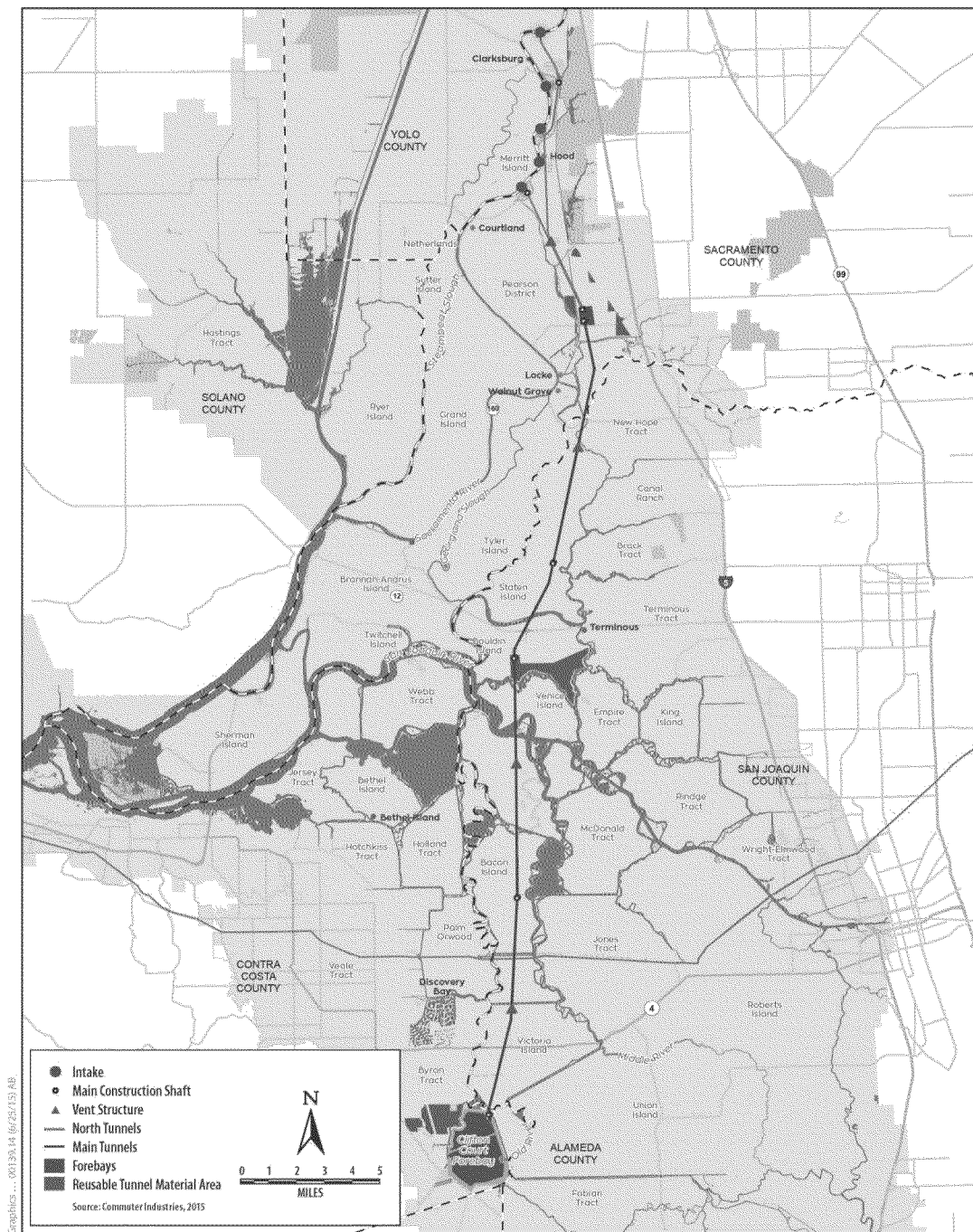
**Resources for Additional Information:**

- ☐ Sacramento County Department of Water Resources, Don Thomas, Senior Planner, 874.5140.
- ☐ Sacramento County’s Delta website:  
[www.sacramentoriverdelta.net](http://www.sacramentoriverdelta.net)
- ☐ State of California’s WaterFix website:  
[www.californiawaterfix.com](http://www.californiawaterfix.com)  
[www.baydeltaconservationplan.com](http://www.baydeltaconservationplan.com)

**Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta & the “California Water Fix” (Alt #4A)**  
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**Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta & the “California Water Fix” (Alt #4A)**  
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**Figure 4.1-1**  
**Location of Conveyance Facility Alignment**  
**for Alternatives 4, 4A, 2D and 5A**



## Major Problems with California WaterFix Preferred Alternative

*August 19, 2015*

- ☐ Fails to achieve either of the co-equal goals
  - ☐ Will only restore a minimal amount of Delta habitat in an attempt to mitigate the adverse project impacts
  - ☐ Fails to deliver any increase in water supplies
  - ☐ These are state and federal obligations under the 2009 Delta Reform Act and Public Law 112-74, respectively
- ☐ DWR and Reclamation have allowed the export water contractors to develop a flawed project design that only benefits the exporters
  - ☐ Agreed to export contractors' offer to pay because of state and federal budget crises
  - ☐ Those who pay the bills run the business
- ☐ DWR and Reclamation have failed to consider or analyze a reasonable range of alternatives
  - ☐ No programs for increased regional self-reliance, conservation, desalination, and water use efficiency.
  - ☐ No infrastructure to capture and store "new" water during periods of high Delta flow
  - ☐ No analysis of new intakes in the western Delta instead of the north Delta
  - ☐ The 17 of the 18 BDCP and Cal. WaterFix alternatives are basically the same alternative – north Delta intakes linked to south Delta export pumps by isolated conveyance
- ☐ New North Delta intakes will adversely impact key fish species by reducing inflows to the Delta and causing reverse flows – just as bad as the south Delta intakes.
- ☐ South Delta intakes will still be used for 51% of the total exports
- ☐ Significant adverse water quality impacts in the BDCP Draft EIR/EIS have been assumed away
  - ☐ Assume Emmaton compliance location will not be changed, but still intend to change it in the future (piecemealing under CEQA)
- ☐ Cal. WaterFix preferred alternative would increase exports in dry periods when Delta fish are most stressed, and would fail to capture more water when Delta flows are high

- ☐ No new detailed modeling has been done for the Draft REIR/SEIS despite significant changes
  - ☐ Greatly reduced ecosystem restoration so major changes in relationship between outflow and salinity
  - ☐ No longer asking for compliance location for Emmaton water quality standard to be changed
  - ☐ Relied instead on Operations and Water Quality modeling for draft BDCP EIR/EIS which contained major errors
  - ☐ Used crude sensitivity analyses based on Late Long Term (2060) studies to estimate Early Long Term (2025) impacts
  - ☐ CEQA requires, and \$15 billion cost demands, detailed modeling of each alternative
- ☐ Proposed \$15 billion Cal. WaterFix project likely be rendered obsolete once the State Water Resources Control Board adopts more stringent flow requirements to protect fish and other beneficial uses
  - ☐ Full capacity of tunnels was seldom used under BDCP operational rule assumptions
  - ☐ North Delta intakes would be used even less frequently once flow requirements and export limits are made more stringent
  - ☐ A completely different alternative, as yet ignored by the BDCP proponents, would likely prove more viable

## Bottom Line

DWR and Reclamation need to step up and promote alternatives that actually achieve both coequal goals and will benefit all of California rather than merely facilitating a flawed WaterFix project being proposed and paid for by the export contractors.

Adding new storage to capture water in wet periods when it is available, and adding demand reduction and local water supply projects discussed in the California Water Action Plan (January 2014) could result in a project that meets the needs of all of California, not just the export water contractors.

The new alternative requested by the State Water Resources Control Board (RDEIR/SDEIS Appendix C, page C-1) looks like a good starting point for developing a real Delta Fix that restores and sustains the Delta and Bay ecosystem and improves California's water supply reliability.



## **California WaterFix Preferred Alternative Would Export More Water in Drier Periods not Less August 19, 2015**

The Cal. WaterFix preferred alternative (Alternative 4A), and the earlier BDCP proposed project (Alternative 4), would operate very differently than how they have been presented by DWR and Reclamation.

Cal. WaterFix and the BDCP have been promoted as taking more water in wet periods (“Big Gulp”) and reducing exports in drier periods (“Little Sip”). The BDCP modeling studies, prepared for the November 2013 DEIR/EIS, indicate quite the opposite.

### **Exports would increase in drier months with BDCP and Cal. Water Fix**

The BDCP modeling results indicate the project would take advantage of the increased export capacity afforded by the twin tunnels. Under the existing Delta configuration, maximum exports are limited to 6,680 cfs at the SWP Banks Pumping Plant and 4,600 cfs at the CVP Jones Pumping Plant (a total of about 11,300 cfs). Higher diversions are allowed into Clifton Court Forebay provided the San Joaquin flow at Vernalis exceeds 1,000 cfs (mid-December to mid-March).

The preferred alternative will allow as much as 15,000 cfs to be exported, even if the capacity of the tunnels were only 9,000 cfs, or even 3,000 cfs. Demand for water from the Delta is highest during drier periods and there is room available in the existing south-of-Delta reservoirs.

### **Exports would seldom increase in wetter months with BDCP and Cal. Water Fix**

Instead of capturing and exporting more water in **wet months** (“Big Gulp”), the BDCP modeling studies indicate Cal. WaterFix exports with the preferred alternative would seldom exceed the existing capacity of 11,280 cfs. During wetter periods, there is less demand because farmer’s fields and urban lawns are soaked, existing south-of-Delta surface storage will soon be full and there is nowhere else to store water.

Without the ability to capture new water (additional storage), Cal. WaterFix will not contribute to restoring and sustaining the Delta ecosystem or help address California’s water supply reliability crisis. Instead, DWR and Reclamation are planning on exporting water when Delta outflows are lowest and the Delta ecosystem is most stressed.

## Cal. WaterFix Preferred Alternative Would Export More Water in Drier Periods not Less

*August 19, 2015*

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The modeled total exports from the Delta for the draft BDCP preferred alternative (Alternative 4A, Scenario H3) are shown in **Figure 1**. Scenario H3 includes Fall X2 but does not include any enhanced spring outflow requirements. It represents Cal. WaterFix alternative 4A under the least restrictive operational scenario.

The Cal. WaterFix preferred alternative would increase total exports to almost 15,000 cfs (**33% increase relative to existing conditions**) when Delta outflows are as low as 4,000 cfs and the Delta ecosystem is under stress. Without additional storage, the BDCP project is unable to take a “Big Gulp.” There are only a few months when Delta outflows exceed 14,000 cfs that total BDCP exports are greater than under existing conditions.

**Figure 2** shows a simple simulation of the total exports of water from the Delta if the “**Big Gulp, Little Sip**” concept were actually applied. This assumes additional storage in and south of the Delta to store additional water captured during periods of high flow. This simulation is based on modeling data from BDCP Alternative 4 (Scenario H3) and assumes the only impediment to exporting water during high flows would be the maximum capacity of the California Aqueduct and Delta Mendota Canal. The “**Little Sip**” concept is imposed by limiting total exports to, say, 1.5 times the Delta outflow. This would ensure that total exports would not increase above existing maximum exports until the Delta outflow exceeds 7,500 cfs.

# Cal. WaterFix Preferred Alternative Would Export More Water in Drier Periods not Less

August 19, 2015

Page 3

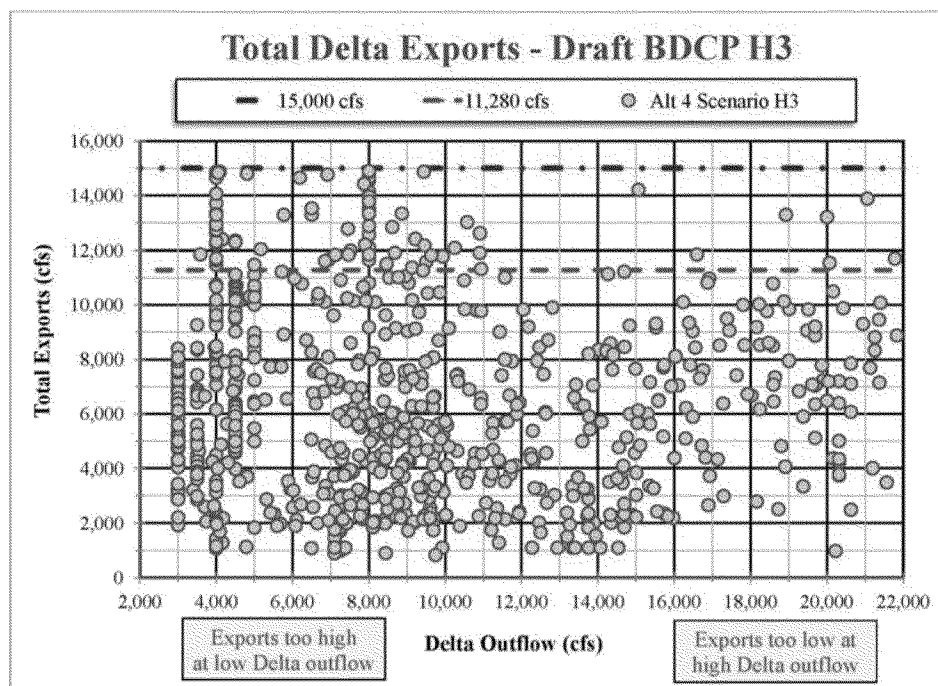


Figure 1: Total exports of water from the Delta for the Cal. WaterFix preferred alternative (under Scenario H3).

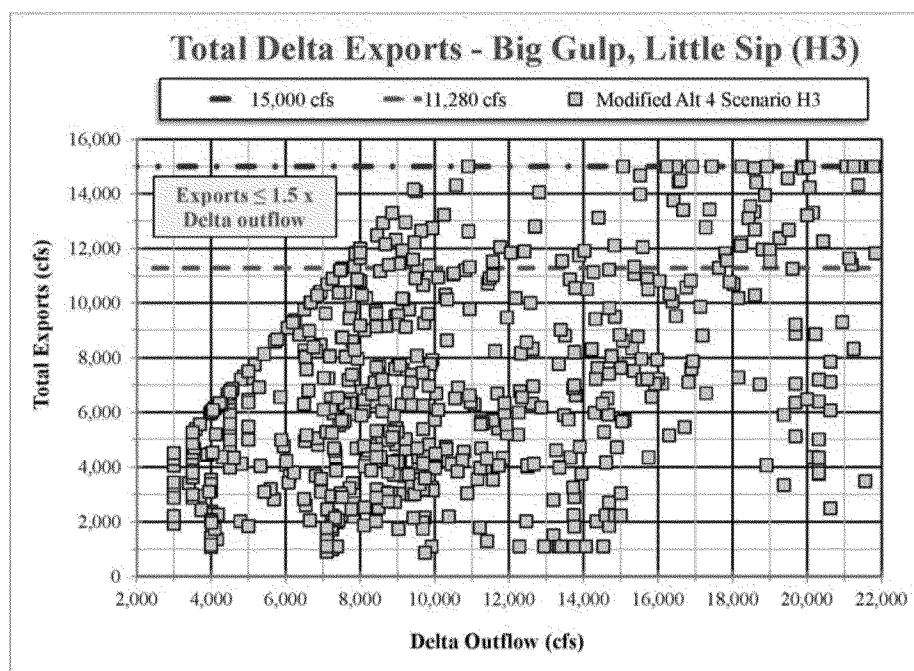
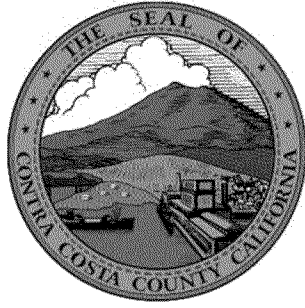


Figure 2: Simulation of total exports of water from the Delta for Cal. WaterFix if the “Big Gulp, Little Sip” concept was actually applied. The “Little Sip” concept is imposed by limiting total exports to 1.5 times the resulting Delta outflow.





FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 4, 2015

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## **San Joaquin and Contra Costa County Leaders Applaud the USDA for Increased Support to Combat the Delta's Threatening Aquatic Weeds**

***New Funding will Aid in Enhanced Coordination among State and Local Partners along with USDA to Eradicate the Menacing Plants with more Effective Methods of Control***

**(Stockton, CA)** San Joaquin and Contra Costa County leaders today applauded \$1 million in new funding from the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Research Service (USDA-ARS), Areawide Pest Management Program to help in the ongoing battle to control the invasion of aquatic plants in the Delta.

"We wish to thank the USDA, and also acknowledge the important role of our local legislators and congressional delegation, along with other State, federal, county and community partners to secure these much needed federal funds to control these aquatic weeds that have severely impacted our local economy and all those who do business in the Delta Region," said Supervisor Kathy Miller. "These invasive plants have sucked the oxygen out of our Delta's waterways, prevented ships from reaching the Port of Stockton and deterred visitors from reaching marina businesses due to clogged waterways."

"The funding received could not have come at a better time due to the ongoing drought and unseasonably warm temperatures. The funds will be invested in improved coordination so these weeds and the mosquitos that nest and breed in them could be eradicated once and for all," said Supervisor Mary Nejedly Piepho.

"This is the result of parallel efforts by local, state and congressional leaders to fight the scourge of water hyacinth with tools that are equal to the scale of the infestation," Assemblymember Susan Talamantes Eggman said. "This infusion, and the operation it funds, in combination with the additional \$4 million in ongoing state funds secured by Delta representatives in the State Legislature, is a significant augmentation of the arsenal we have to deploy against water hyacinth."

"This federal funding represents a direct investment in the health of the Delta as an economic driver in the region, and our ability to eradicate dangerous and invasive plants from its ecosystem. It will provide critical new tools to better manage the growth of these aquatic weeds that can obstruct waterways and stifle the ability to provide water for urban and agricultural uses. I am thankful to the USDA and all of our partners who came together to address the threat that these invasive species can have on the Delta economy, environment, and agriculture," said Congressman Jerry McNerney (CA-9).

"Invasive species is a chronic problem in California which impacts hundreds of species. Eradicating water hyacinth is critical for healthier waterways, a better boating experience, expanding commerce at our ports and operating California's water systems," said Congressman Jeff Denham (CA-10).

"These federal funds will enable communities in the Delta to make use of new techniques that have proven to be far more effective in controlling the weeds than prior eradication methods that were ineffective and expensive," stated U.S. Rep. Mike Thompson, Co-Chair of the Invasive Species Caucus. "We all know invasive species pose a costly challenge to infrastructure, agriculture and the environment. These are preventing ships from reaching port, discouraging visitors and hurting business. By making use of new and better eradication techniques, we can get our delta waterways back to the healthy state on which so many jobs and businesses depend."

"This team effort jointly spearheaded by stakeholders in San Joaquin County, Contra Costa Counties, and the federal government will help address the invasive aquatic weeds that pose an environmental risk to our communities, which depend on the Delta to provide valuable water resources to the area," said Congressman DeSaulnier (CA-11).

"We've all seen how the drought has made the problem of invasive species worse in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. Water hyacinth, Brazilian waterweed and emergent giant reed present massive threats to agriculture, navigation and the environment. As a member of the House Invasive Species Caucus, I am proud that we have worked together at the local, state and federal level to prevent further harm to our health and to the local economy," noted Congressman John Garamendi.

The inter-agency partnership for improved control is targeting floating water hyacinth and submerged egeria or Brazilian waterweed, as well as the shoreline giant grass known as arundo. All three plants are non-native and invasive and produce flowers, but typically spread via buds and fragments borne by Delta currents. They can grow throughout most of the year in the Delta. In the summer and fall of 2014, the Stockton Deepwater Ship Channel, Port of Stockton, private marinas and public boat ramps, and the state and federal water pumping stations around Tracy were plagued with dense mats of water hyacinth that made navigation dangerous or impossible, restricting commercial shipping and trapping recreational boats in their slips. Water hyacinth and egeria also reduced water flow to the South Delta pumping facilities,

requiring removal of tens of thousands of tons of plants over the fall and winter with conveyer belts, backhoes and huge dump trucks. Dense aquatic weeds caused similar problems in Discovery Bay and elsewhere in Contra Costa County. The mats of aquatic weeds made control of mosquitos by the San Joaquin and Contra Costa County Mosquito Vector Control Districts more difficult. Mosquito outbreaks led to detections of West Nile virus in mosquitos and birds in both counties in 2014.

The USDA-ARS Delta Areawide project, which first received funding in June 2014, is designed to develop and implement principles of IPM, to increase the efficiency and success of control of water hyacinth and other invasive aquatic plants, and to improve coordination among agencies responsible for their management in the Delta. Some of the funds will also be used to improve control in the western Delta in Contra Costa County. Key participants include the USDA-Agricultural Research Service, Exotic and Invasive Weeds Research Unit in Albany and Davis, which is leading the project and conducting research to improve weed control efficiency. The NASA-Ames Research Center in Mountain View is using satellites, areal images and visual models based on water nutrients and flow to pinpoint and predict where water hyacinth and other aquatic plants are growing and moving. This critical information is being used by California State Parks, Division of Boating and Waterways to prioritize the worst invasive populations of water hyacinth for treatment with herbicides and mechanical removal under its state-funded programs.

The San Joaquin and Contra Costa County Mosquito Vector Control Districts are receiving funding to augment their efforts to control mosquitos near aquatic plant-invaded waterways. Several departments at UC-Davis are also involved, providing new knowledge of weed and mosquito biology and an economic model to track project success. New partners this year include the California Department of Food and Agriculture-Plant Health and Pest Prevention Services, and the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy. The ultimate goal of the Delta Areawide project is to reduce or eliminate the economic and environmental damage caused by large populations of water hyacinth and other invasive aquatic plants, thereby improving protection of water resources and Delta habitats.

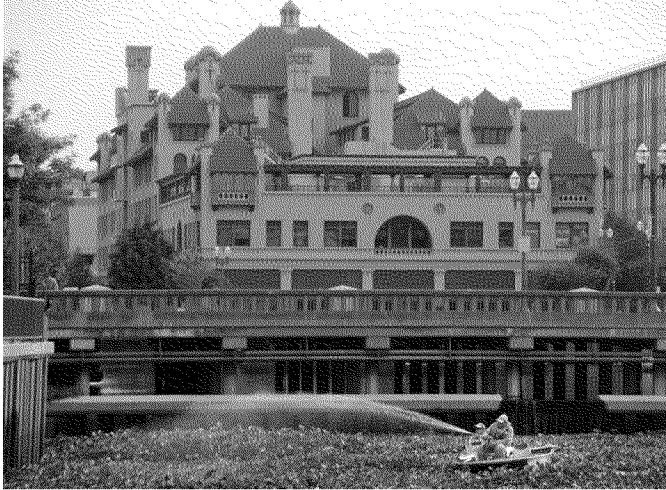
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# Hope floats in hyacinth fight

State officials optimistic weeds will diminish



A crew with the California Department of Boating and Waterways sprays an herbicide on the water hyacinth growing at the head of the Stockton Deep Water Channel on Oct. 23, 2014, in downtown Stockton. CLIFFORD OTO/RECORD FILE 2014

**By Alex Breitler**  
**Record Staff Writer**

Posted Mar. 7, 2016 at 6:31 PM

Could 2016 be the year that the tide turns against water hyacinth?

With annual spraying of the invasive Delta weed expected to begin on Thursday, state officials say they're hoping for a reduced crop this year.

At least one observer who has been critical of state efforts in the past said he's hopeful, too.

"I think they're getting a better handle on it and I'm optimistic that it'll be more under control this year," said Bill Wells, head of the California Delta Chambers and Visitors Bureau. "All the rain is certainly not hurting anything."

There is reason to share his optimism:

- This year, the state's hyacinth-spraying armada will be larger. An extra \$4 million in funding starting last summer allowed officials to hire seven additional technicians to spray herbicides onto the floating plants, as well as two managers to oversee them, a spokeswoman for the state Department of

Parks and Recreation said Monday. Some of their boats have been upgraded with new motors, too, and four entirely new boats are being built.

While the money was available last year, it took time to hire the staff; 2016 is the first full year that they will be on the water.

- This is also the first full year of a multiyear contract with a mechanical harvesting company. The contract was delayed for months last year, but now the harvesters are available to target hyacinth hot spots on an ongoing basis. What's more, the state has entered into a contract with the California Conservation Corps to bring on additional workers when needed.
- Using aerial images, state officials have identified new hyacinth nurseries where the plants grow before dispersing throughout the Delta. Early spraying efforts will target those areas.
- And finally, "Mother Nature also helped us in late December with all the deep frost, and that has also slowed down the growth," said Gloria Sandoval, a spokeswoman for Parks and Recreation. "Hopefully with the combination of that and the nursery sites we're targeting, we'll have a better year."

To be sure, we will still see water hyacinth. Experts say it will never be eradicated from the Delta.

While bureaucratic entanglements were partly responsible for especially bad outbreaks in recent years, some of the problem is out of our hands. Overall Stockton's climate has been warming, which fosters plant growth. And the ongoing drought has resulted in less flow to flush the plants out.

Regaining at least some level of control over hyacinth would be a victory in 2016. Last year the state sprayed a record number of acres, and some improvement was noted by NASA officials who are using satellites to monitor hyacinth.

Still, Stockton's Lighted Boat Parade was canceled for the second consecutive year.

This year's spraying will start on Thursday, about a week later than last year but much earlier than other recent years and within 10 days of March 1, when the window of opportunity opened under the state's spraying permit.

Initially, spray crews will focus on the following areas: Fourteen Mile Slough, Old and Middle rivers, Paradise Cut, Whiskey Slough, and the Tuolumne and San Joaquin rivers, including the Stockton waterfront.

— *Contact reporter Alex Breitler at (209) 546-8295 or [abreitler@recordnet.com](mailto:abreitler@recordnet.com). Follow him at [recordnet.com/breitlerblog](http://recordnet.com/breitlerblog) and on Twitter @alexbreitler.*

## Spraying For Water Hyacinth In The Delta Starts Thursday

by Rich Ibarra

Tuesday, March 8, 2016, Sacramento, CA

<http://www.caprado.org/68575>

Spraying for water hyacinth in the Delta will start on Thursday with the use of more boats, manpower and other resources.

The California Department of Boating and Waterways will have seven more technicians, two additional managers, and help from the California Conservation Corps to battle the invasive weed this year.

New motors for six boats, and four new boats will be added later in the year along with a mechanical harvester.

Gloria Sandoval with the department says the most heavily infested areas will be sprayed first.

"Most importantly it's going to be in the Stockton waterfront and Port of Stockton, as well," she says.

"Those are areas that have been repeatedly, year after year, been affected by the water hyacinth so we definitely want to target those areas."

According to Sandoval, in the past few years the warm winters have fostered hyacinth growth, but this year a hard winter freeze killed off some of the hyacinth and slowed its invasion.





## Drought Update

### Wednesday, March 2, 2016

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#### **KEY ACTION ITEMS FROM THIS WEEK**

- **Californians Save 1.1 Million Acre-Feet of Water, Urged to Stay Focused on Conservation:** On February 25, the State Water Board announced that Californians missed Governor Brown's 25 percent water conservation mandate in January, as urban water suppliers reported a cumulative savings of 24.8 percent for the eight months since mandatory conservation began. With more than 1.1 million acre-feet of water conserved since June 2015 through January 2016, the state is 96 percent of its goal of 1.2 million acre-feet of water to be saved by the end of February.

Statewide, the conservation rate decreased from 18.4 percent in December 2015 to 17.1 percent in January, which equates to approximately 62,644 acre-feet. However, the average per capita water use declined from 67 gallons per person per day in December 2015 to 61 gallons in January 2016, the lowest per-person rate since water-use reporting began in June 2014.
- **2016 Emergency Regulation Takes Effect; Information Updated on State Water Board Website:** On February 12, the Office of Administrative Law approved the 2016 Emergency Conservation Regulation adopted by the State Water Board, which extends the original 2015 regulation through October 2016. Under the 2016 regulation, water suppliers may request an adjustment to their individual conservation standard by submitting required information through a new online tool at the [Drinking Water Information Clearing House \(DRINC\) Portal](#). The tool is now available through March 15. For more information, please visit the State Water Board's [Water Conservation Portal](#).
- **DWR Increases 2016 State Water Project Allocation Estimate to 30%:** On February 24, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) announced an increase to its estimated State Water Project (SWP) delivery allocation to 30 percent. For 2016, the 29 contractors that receive SWP water requested more than 4.1 million acre-feet of water. With the latest allocation increase, they will receive 1.27 million acre-feet of requested supplies, however, extended dry weather could force an allocation reduction. State Water Project contractors serve approximately 25 million Californians and just under a million acres of irrigated farmland.
- **California's Three Traditionally Wettest Months End with Statewide Snowpack Water Content Less than Average:** On March 1, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) announced that the statewide snowpack, which is the source for about 30 percent of California's water supply, is at 83 percent of the March 1 average. Although readings at Phillips Station are higher than the previous year in March, snowpack levels are still below what would be considered adequate for any reasonable level of recovery at this point.

DWR conducted its third media-oriented manual snowpack survey of the season at Phillips Station, 90 miles east of Sacramento just off Highway 50 in the Sierra Nevada. The snow course is one of more than 250 snow courses that will be measured manually several times this winter to determine the water content of the snowpack.

- **DWR Releases Draft Regulations on SGMA, Comment Period Opens:** On February 18, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) released draft regulations that will assist local public agencies and groundwater sustainability agencies to meet their requirements of the 2014 Sustainability Groundwater Management Act (SGMA). The regulations were developed after conducting public information sessions and extensive outreach around the state to gather perspectives from advisory groups, statewide stakeholders, partners, local agencies, and the public. The draft regulations are available for public comment until March 25.
- **CDFW Awards \$16.7 Million to Fisheries Habitat Restoration, Forest Legacy and Drought Projects:** On February 19, the Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) announced 67 projects that will receive \$16.7 million in funding from its Fisheries Restoration Grant Program (FRGP). These projects will further the objectives of the state and federal recovery plans which include removing barriers to fish migration, restoring riparian habitat, and creating a more resilient and sustainably managed water resources system that can better withstand drought conditions. Visit the FRGP website for a complete list of projects approved for funding.
- **California's Water Conservation Education Program Campaign:** This past week, the Save Our Water PSA featuring Golden State Warrior stars, Stephen Curry and Klay Thompson ("Splash Brothers"), will continue to air on NBC Bay Area through April. In addition, Save Our Water promoted an Associated Press article which highlighted ten days of record heat and a shortage of rain in February which continues to raise concerns for California's drought in 2016.

Save Our Water continues to promote the "Claim your Turf Replacement", and "Claim Your Toilet" rebate programs. For more tips and tools to help conserve water and keep trees healthy during the drought, please visit Save Our Water's website, which is available in both English and Spanish, or connect with the program on Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.

- **Governor's Drought Task Force:** The Task Force continues to take actions that conserve water and coordinate state response to the drought. During the February 25 meeting, the Task Force provided an update on water conditions, water operations and environmental habitat, water conservation, and drought impacts and response. In addition, Save Our Water provided a summary of the current water conservation efforts planned for 2016, and highlighted the drought conservation efforts accomplished in 2015.

The Labor Workforce Development Agency announced that the federally funded Drought Temporary Jobs program has enrolled 949 participants at 136 worksite projects in 24 counties. The program is funded through the U.S. Department of Labor's National Dislocated Worker Grant program which offers 6 months of employment on drought-related public works projects for up to 1,000 workers affected by the drought.

## **ONGOING DROUGHT SUPPORT**

- **Emergency Food Aid, Utility and Employment Assistance:** The Department of Social Services (CDSS) Drought Food Assistance Program (DFAP) provides food assistance to affected communities that suffer high levels of unemployment from the drought. To date, over 1,171,506 boxes have been provided to community food banks in drought-impacted counties, with an average of approximately 13,250 food boxes per week since June 2014. Approximately 1,056,023 boxes of food have been picked up by 547,813 households.

Food boxes distributions vary by county and occur 1-4 times per month. Nearly 60% of the food distributions have occurred in the Tulare Basin (Fresno, Kern, Kings and Tulare). Approximately 18,140 boxes were scheduled for delivery for the week ending February 26 to Fresno, Kern, Kings Riverside, San Joaquin, Siskiyou, Stanislaus, and Tulare counties.

The Department of Community Services and Development (CSD) allocated an additional \$600,000, under the federally-funded Community Services Block Grant (CSBG), to continue the Drought Water Assistance Program (DWAP) which provides financial assistance to help low-income families pay their water bills. As of January 31, CSD has reported a total of \$598,259 has been issued to 2,973 households. As a result, all funds for water assistance payments have been expended.

CSD is in the process of allocating \$400,000, under CSBG, to continue the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) drought assistance program, which provides assistance in employment training and placement services to individuals impacted by the drought. This program provides employment training and placement services to migrant and seasonal farmworkers suffering job loss or reduced employment due to the drought. To date, CSD has reported that a total of \$327,335 has been expended with 109 participants enrolled.

In response to California's historic drought, CSD has received \$7.5 million in General Fund to implement the Drought Emergency Assistance Program (DEAP) to provide emergency relief and support services to drought-impacted individuals and their families and households. As of February 19, \$5.8 million has been issued to 4,428 households.

- **Drought Response Funding:** The \$687 million in state drought funding that was appropriated last March through emergency legislation, as well as \$142 million provided in the 2014 Budget Act, continues to advance toward meeting critical needs. To date, \$468 million has been committed, and nearly \$625 million of the emergency funds appropriated in March came from sources dedicated to capital improvements to water systems. Since March, the Department of Water Resources has expedited grant approvals, getting \$21 million immediately allocated to grantees that were pre-approved for certain projects.

As planned in March, the next \$200 million of expedited capital funding was awarded in October, and the remaining \$250 million will be granted by fall 2015. The 2014 Budget Act appropriated an additional \$53.8 million to CAL FIRE over its typical budget to enhance firefighter surge capacity and retain seasonal firefighters beyond the typical fire season.

As a result of continuing drought conditions, emergency legislation was enacted in March 2015 that appropriated over \$1 billion of additional funds for drought-related projects and activities. The Administration's May Revision proposal includes an additional \$2.2 billion for programs that protect and expand local water supplies, improve water conservation, and provide immediate relief to impacted communities.

## **CURRENT DROUGHT CONDITIONS**

- **Recent Precipitation:** Last week, a series of weak storms moved through the state with the highest amounts of average rainfall in the North Coast ranging from 0.3 to 2.0 inches. Additional areas that received precipitation include 0.01 to 0.3 inches in the Bay Area, and 0.1 to 1.5 inches in the Northern Sierras.

Below are precipitation totals (in inches) from February 19 through February 26, and year-to-date rainfall based on the water year cycle (October 1, 2015 to September 30, 2016).

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| • <b>Bakersfield:</b> 1.11" (3.46")    | • <b>Redding:</b> 2.44" (23.19")          |
| • <b>Paso Robles:</b> 0.61" (5.36")    | • <b>Riverside:</b> 0.28" (3.90")         |
| • <b>Fresno:</b> 1.38" (9.94")         | • <b>Sacramento:</b> 1.04" (9.68")        |
| • <b>Yosemite:</b> 3.94" (24.86")      | • <b>San Diego:</b> 0.20" (6.08")         |
| • <b>Los Angeles:</b> 1.12" (4.53")    | • <b>Mount Shasta:</b> 3.49" (24.47")     |
| • <b>Stockton:</b> 0.80" (9.88")       | • <b>South Lake Tahoe:</b> 2.27" (13.43") |
| • <b>San Francisco:</b> 1.38" (14.53") | • <b>Monterey:</b> 2.18" (15.46")         |

- **Weather Outlook:** At the end of the week, Northern California can expect a return to a wetter weather pattern which will continue into the weekend bringing gusty winds and periods of rain. Southern California can expect cooler weather by Friday with chances for rainfall on Sunday into at least the early part of next week.
- **Snow Survey:** The March [manual snowpack survey](#) recorded California snowpack at 83 percent of normal to date, and 73 percent of the April 1 average. Regionally, the Northern Sierra Nevada is at 89 percent of average to date, the Central Sierra is at 85 percent of average to date, and the Southern Sierra Nevada is at 73 percent of average to date.
- **Projected Reservoir Management:** Since the last report on February 19, Central Valley reservoirs from Shasta and Trinity in the North to Isabella in the South had a net gain in storage of 419,241 acre-feet (AF), with a total gain of 428,228 AF and a total loss of 8,987 AF. Shasta Reservoir increased by 113,714 AF, while San Luis Reservoir, an off-stream reservoir for the Central Valley Project and State Water Project, increased its storage by 56,817 AF.

[Reservoir Levels](#) as of March 1 have increased, including: Castaic Lake 28% of capacity (32% of year to date average); Don Pedro 47% of capacity (66% of average); Exchequer 18% of capacity (35% of average); Folsom Lake 62% of capacity (111% of average); Lake Oroville 53% of capacity (76% of average); Perris Lake 34% (41% of average); Millerton Lake 52% of capacity (79% of average); New Melones 19% of capacity (31% of average); Pine Flat 27% of capacity (51% of average); San Luis 44% of capacity (51% of average); Shasta Reservoir 61% of capacity (83% of average); and Trinity Lake 35% of capacity (47% of average). An update of water levels at other [smaller reservoirs](#) is also available.

- **Dry Well Reports:** As California faces the fifth year of drought, the Governor's Drought Task Force continues to monitor and identify communities and local water systems in danger of running out of water. In 2015, a cross-agency team, led by the Department of Water Resources (DWR), developed a new system that improves and streamlines data collection and reporting for [household water shortages](#) for California water systems with fewer than 15 household connections.

As of February 24, approximately 2,591 wells statewide have been identified as critical or dry, affecting an estimated 12,955 residents. Cal OES reported that 2,371 of the 2,591 dry wells are concentrated in the inland regions within the Central Valley. If you are experiencing a water supply shortage, please [submit a report](#) on DWR's website.



- **Vulnerable Water Systems:** The State Water Board continues to provide technical and funding assistance to several communities facing drinking water shortages, and is monitoring water systems across the state. Since January 2014, 109 out of the 150 projects approved to receive emergency funding for interim replacement drinking water have been executed. On May 19, 2015, the State Water Board adopted Guidelines for administering the latest emergency drought appropriations of \$19 million announced this past March. To date, the State Water Board has received requests for \$12.8 million of those funds.
- **Fire Activity:** Since the beginning of the year, firefighters from CAL FIRE and the U.S. Forest Service have responded to over 200 wildfires across the state, burning 88 acres. Fire activity across California is low resulting in 41 combined wildfires in just the past week.
- **CAL FIRE Burn Suspension Status:** Due to cooler temperatures and recent rains, CAL FIRE has lifted the burn suspension in the State Responsibility Area in Northern California and portions of Central California, allowing residential outdoor burning of landscape debris with a permit. CAL FIRE continues to monitor weather conditions closely and has the ability to increase staffing should the weather conditions change or if there is a need to support wildfire activity and any other emergencies in the State. For additional information on preparing for and preventing wildfires, please visit <http://www.readyforwildfire.org/>.

## **Local Government**

- **Local Emergency Proclamations:** A total of 63 local Emergency Proclamations have been received to date from city, county, and tribal governments, as well as special districts:
  - **29 Counties:** Butte, Colusa, Calaveras, El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Inyo, Humboldt, Kern, Kings, Lake, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Modoc, Plumas, San Bernardino, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Shasta, Siskiyou, Sonoma, Stanislaus, Sutter, Trinity, Tulare, Tuolumne, and Yuba.
  - **13 Cities:** City of Live Oak (Sutter County), City of Lodi (San Joaquin County), City of Manteca (San Joaquin County), City of Montague (Siskiyou County), City of Porterville (Tulare County), City of Portola (Plumas County), City of Ripon (San Joaquin County), City of San Juan Bautista (San Benito County), City of Santa Barbara (Santa Barbara County), City of Rancho Cucamonga (San Bernardino County), City of West Sacramento (Yolo County), City of Willits (Mendocino County) and the City of Fort Bragg (Mendocino County).
  - **9 Tribes:** Cortina Indian Rancheria (Colusa County), Hoopa Valley Tribe (Humboldt County), Karuk Tribe (Siskiyou/Humboldt Counties), Kashia Band of Pomo Indians of the Stewarts Point Rancheria (Sonoma County), Picayune Rancheria of Chukchansi Indians (Madera County) Sherwood Valley Pomo Indian Tribe (Mendocino County), Tule River Indian Tribe (Tulare County), Yocha Dehe Wintun Nation (Yolo County), and Yurok Tribe (Humboldt County).
  - **12 Special Districts:** Carpinteria Valley Water District (Santa Barbara County), Goleta Water District (Santa Barbara County), Groveland Community Services District (Tuolumne County), Lake Don Pedro Community Services District (Mariposa Stanislaus County), Mariposa Public Utility District (Mariposa County), Meiners Oaks Water District (Ventura County), Montecito Water District (Santa Barbara County),

Mountain House Community Service District (San Joaquin County), Nevada Irrigation District (Nevada County), Placer County Water Agency (Placer County), Tuolumne Utilities District (Tuolumne County), and Twain Harte Community Services District (Tuolumne County).

- **Water Agency Conservation Efforts:** The Association of California Water Agencies (ACWA) has identified several hundred local water agencies that have implemented water conservation actions. These water agencies are responding to the drought by implementing conservation programs, which include voluntary calls for reduced water usage and mandatory restrictions where water shortages are worst.

ACWA released a Drought Response Toolkit to assist water agencies as they take action to meet state-mandated water conservation target and communicate information about water use restrictions, enforcement and other issues with their customers, media and other audiences.

- **County Drought Taskforces:** A total of 33 counties have established drought task forces to coordinate local drought response. These counties include: Butte, Colusa, Glenn, Humboldt, Kern, Kings, Lake, Madera, Mendocino, Merced, Modoc, Monterey, Napa, Nevada, Orange, Placer, Plumas, Sacramento, San Francisco, San Joaquin, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, Santa Clara, Siskiyou, Stanislaus, Solano, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity, Tulare, Tuolumne, and Yolo.
- **Tribal Taskforce:** A total of 7 tribes have established drought task forces to coordinate tribal drought response. These tribes include: Hoopa Valley Tribe (Humboldt County), Hopland Tribe (Mendocino County), Karuk Tribe (Siskiyou County), La Jolla Band of Luiseno Indians (San Diego County), Sherwood Valley Tribe (Mendocino County), Trinidad Tribe (Humboldt County), and Yurok Tribe (Humboldt and Del Norte County).

## **DROUGHT RELATED WEBSITES FOR MORE INFORMATION**

### **Drought.CA.Gov: California's Drought Information Clearinghouse**

State's Water Conservation Campaign, [Save Our Water](#)

Local Government, [Drought Clearinghouse and Toolkit](#)

California Department of Food and Agriculture, [Drought Information](#)

California Department of Water Resources, [Current Water Conditions](#)

California Data Exchange Center, [Snow Pack/Water Levels](#)

California State Water Resources Control Board, Water Rights, [Drought Info and Actions](#)

California Natural Resources Agency, [Drought Info and Actions](#)

State Water Resources Control Board, Drinking Water, [SWRCB Drinking Water Program](#)

California State Water Project, [Information](#)

[U.S. Drought Monitor](#) for Current Conditions throughout the Region

[U.S. Drought Portal](#), National Integrated Drought Information System (NIDIS)

National Weather Service [Climate Predictor Center](#)

USDA Drought Designations by County [CA County Designations](#)

USDA Disaster and Drought Assistance Information [USDA Programs](#)

U.S. Small Business Administration Disaster Assistance Office



# Los Angeles Times

## The feds slam a big water agency for cooking its books -- but they didn't go far enough

By: Michael Hiltzik  
March 10, 2016

The Westlands Water District is the biggest of big shots in the water world of California's Central Valley -- so big that it was able late last year to beat the federal government in a secret deal to secure a reliable water supply for its member almond and pistachio growers in perpetuity -- despite the fact that the deal makes a hash of efforts to produce an overall state water policy.

But on Wednesday, the Securities and Exchange Commission unveiled another aspect to Westlands' way of doing business: cooking the books. The SEC slapped the district and two officers with a total of \$195,000 in penalties for faking financial records in connection with a 2012 bond issue.

As my colleague Geoffrey Mohan reports, the SEC is crowing about this being its largest settlement ever in a case against a municipal bond agency. Sadly, however, the agency's action is just another slap on the wrist for white collar wrongdoers. Nothing in the settlement, big as it is, will deter either Westlands or any other municipal bond issuer from trying to pull the same stunt in the future.

What's especially disturbing is that the SEC, despite calling this a case of "negligence," had evidence that the district and its officers, General Manager Thomas Birmingham and former Treasurer Louie Ciapponi, knew exactly what they were doing. When questioned by a Westlands board member about the transaction at issue, Birmingham joked that they were engaging in "a little Enron accounting."

Yet no one admitted to wrongdoing in the settlement, making this another case of something being done illegally, yet without any human being actually being identified as the wrongdoing party. What's left unsaid in the SEC action is why Birmingham or Ciapponi should be henceforth permitted to hold any official office with an agency issuing bonds to the public. Also escaping scot-free, at least for the moment, is the "independent auditor" who told Westlands that the financial maneuvers the SEC found improper were "permissible."

The auditing firm isn't identified in the SEC documents, but the firm whose 2012 Westlands audit is attached to the bond circular at the heart of the SEC's case is Clovis-based Sampson, Sampson & Patterson. We've asked the firm to comment, but have not received a response.

Let's look at what they were up to. In 2009, the district discovered that its revenues would fall \$10 million below what it needed to meet bond covenants requiring it to collect 25% more each year than it had to pay in principal and interest on its debt. In fact, because of the drought, its coverage ratio wasn't 1.25, but as little as 0.11. Had that happened, it would have been in technical default on some of its bonds.

Instead of bringing revenue up by raising rates to its users by 11.6%, which would have done the job, Westlands reclassified some of its cash holdings as revenue and moved some other money around. It did so, the SEC says, "solely" to meet the covenant.

What concerns the SEC is that the misstatement made it into the official offering for a \$77-million refunding bond issue in 2012. That misled buyers of those bonds into thinking that the district invariably collected enough money to cover its bonds, when the truth is it had fallen hugely short in 2010. That would have made a difference to many investors, who might have decided to stay away.

The implications of all this are serious. For one thing, it shows that Westlands management is willing to mislead investors simply to save money for its users. It raises the question of whether a district that behaves this way is a suitable partner for the federal government in other deals, including the huge litigation settlement last year that was negotiated in secret, and that amounted to a huge federal giveaway to the district. And it could affect a congressional debate over that settlement. It should.

The SEC action casts a shadow over \$200 million in bonds issued by Westlands and a neighboring district, which have been placed on negative credit watch by the rating agency Moody's. But the darkest shadow is cast over the cause of good governance. As long as senior officials can boast about doing "Enron accounting" and then, when they're caught, get off without admitting their wrongdoing for the record, there's little hope that the public interest will be protected.

**Keep up to date with Michael Hiltzik: email [michael.hiltzik@latimes.com](mailto:michael.hiltzik@latimes.com)**

## Southern California Water Agency Takes Step to Buy Delta Land

by Amy Quinton

Tuesday, March 8, 2016, Sacramento, CA

<http://www.caprado.org/68609>

The board of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California has voted to enter into a contract to buy 20,000 acres of land in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

The Metropolitan Water District is the largest water wholesaler in the state. It wants to buy four islands in the center of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, and a portion of a fifth island.

Some of the land is also in the path of two tunnels Governor Jerry Brown wants to build to carry water to southern California. MWD doesn't deny owning the land would help the project.

"Should a California WaterFix project that the Governor's administration is pursuing go forward, we believe this land could be beneficial to that," says Jeffrey Kightlinger, general manager with MWD.

Kightlinger also says should an earthquake in the Delta shut down the state's water supply, owning the land would help get it back up and running. MWD also says it wants to restore habitat to improve water quality.

Delta residents say it's a "water grab" that will clear the way for the tunnels.

"I don't buy their argument that they only want to restore habitat. They're anxiously moving forward with promoting California WaterFix. They are at the water board helping push through the projects," says Barbara Barrigan-Parilla with the advocacy group Restore the Delta.

Delta Wetland Properties currently owns the land. The deal could cost around \$200 million.

# General Location



Real Property Development and Management Group

Item 8-8

November 9, 2015



# THE SACRAMENTO BEE

## Southern California water agency moves to buy Delta islands

By: Dale Kasler and Ryan Sabalow

Tuesday, March 8

In a controversial move that could shake up California's water community, Southern California's most powerful water agency moved a giant step closer Tuesday to purchasing a cluster of islands in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta.

Following months of negotiations, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California's board of directors authorized its general manager to enter into a contract to buy the islands from the owner, Delta Wetlands Properties, a company controlled by Swiss conglomerate Zurich Insurance Group.

Metropolitan delivers water wholesale to 19 million people through 26 agencies. The board's vote, with 54 percent of its member agencies approving under Metropolitan's weighted voting system, immediately set off alarm bells in the Delta and elsewhere in Northern California.

The Delta is the conduit through which the state and federal water projects deliver billions of gallons of water from Northern California to the vast farmlands of the San Joaquin Valley and millions of urban Southern Californians. The prospect of Metropolitan controlling a group of islands in the heart of the estuary has sparked accusations that the agency will somehow use the islands to engineer a "water grab" — an allegation Metropolitan has steadfastly denied.

Jeff Kightlinger, Metropolitan's general manager, said he plans to execute purchase documents "within the next couple of days." He wouldn't disclose the purchase price Tuesday, but said the deal is for somewhere between \$150 million and \$240 million. The price will become public once the documents are executed, he said.

The deal involves five islands: Bouldin Island, Bacon Island, Webb Tract, most of Holland Tract and a small portion of Chipps Island. The islands, covering 20,000 acres, are spread among San Joaquin and Contra Costa counties.

Zurich bought the properties more than 20 years ago with the idea of converting the islands, some of which lie below sea level, into for-profit reservoirs that could ship water to Southern California in dry years. The plan has never gained traction, facing considerable legal opposition, and the islands are currently used for farming.

Kightlinger said Metropolitan has no plans to use the islands as reservoirs. Instead, it's exploring using at least some of the land to help pave the way for California WaterFix, Gov. Jerry Brown's \$15.5 billion plan to build massive twin tunnels beneath the Delta and shore up reliability of water shipments to Southern California.

# THE SACRAMENTO BEE

Kightlinger said some of the islands could serve as a staging ground for equipment, excavated dirt and other materials. Two of the islands lie in the heart of the proposed tunnels route.

In addition, Kightlinger said Metropolitan is prepared to use the islands to restore wildlife habitat. Given that water-pumping through the Delta is frequently halted because of environmental concerns, Kightlinger said restoring habitat represents “enlightened self-interest” on Metropolitan’s part, helping to keep the water flowing by making the Delta’s ecosystem healthier. Owning the islands also would position Metropolitan to repair levees more quickly in case of a major earthquake that might interrupt the flow of water south.

Rather than a ‘water grab,’ he said, “This is about safeguarding the water we do have.”

Kightlinger said Metropolitan believes it has the legal clearance to use the islands for the purposes he outlined.

Delta landowners, however, said they think they could erect legal roadblocks if Metropolitan tries to make wholesale changes to the islands. George Hartmann, a Stockton lawyer who represents farmers and others in the area, said Delta interests can’t prevent Metropolitan from buying the islands but can ensure the agency abides by previously negotiated legal settlements that restrict what can be done with the land.

“We’re not going to roll over and play dead,” Hartmann said. “We’re going to do our best to make sure the agreements are enforced.”

Hartmann scoffed at the idea that Metropolitan wants to improve environmental habitat in the estuary, which has been degraded by decades of pumping.

“They have only one interest. And that is getting more water and securing more stable water, and it’s all about the money,” Hartmann said.

Barbara Barrigan-Parrilla of the advocacy group Restore the Delta, agreed, saying the big Southern California agency will find a way to steer more water south. Once Metropolitan has the islands, “they have the resources to change laws and policies to maximize their access to Delta water in their favor,” she said.

Barrigan-Parrilla wasn’t mollified that Metropolitan said it is steering away from Zurich’s water-reservoir plan; her group is opposed to any project that would help facilitate the governor’s Delta tunnels plan.

“We believe that having MWD as a neighbor is an existential threat to the future of the Delta and Delta communities,” she said.

Michael George, a state official who helps oversee Delta water rights, doesn’t see a peril from Metropolitan’s ownership. George, the Delta “watermaster” at the State Water Resources Control Board, said Metropolitan has been “pretty wide open about what it’s doing” and won’t be able to make big changes or export more water south without getting regulatory approvals.

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“My sense is that Metropolitan is a very responsible, pretty transparent public agency that owns lots of properties throughout the state and is a pretty good steward of those facilities,” George said. “I certainly would anticipate, as I’m sure they do, that there will be a great deal of scrutiny of however they choose to use their (Delta) property.”

A spokesman for Zurich had no immediate comment.

Metropolitan spokesman Bob Muir said the agency is still discussing whether to take on partners in the purchase, including a group of Kern County water agencies. The Metropolitan board is expected to take a final vote on the purchase in late April.

Read more here: <http://www.sacbee.com/news/state/california/water-and-drought/article64842097.html#storylink=cpy>



# San Jose Mercury News

## Delta islands sold to big Southern Californian water agency

*By Denis Cuff, [dcuff@bayareanewsgroup.com](mailto:dcuff@bayareanewsgroup.com)*

A giant water district for 19 million Southern Californians has approved the purchase of four Delta islands in a move arousing suspicions about its influence over the state's water delivery system.

The Metropolitan Water District board authorized its general manager Tuesday to purchase the Webb and Holland Tracts in Contra Costa County and Bouldin and Bacon Islands in San Joaquin County.

Metropolitan water officials said the purchase price could range between \$150 million and \$240 million.

Barbara Barrigan-Parrilla, executive director of Restore the Delta, said she worries Metropolitan will use the land to help the state build the governor's unpopular plan for water tunnels through the Delta.

"They will own two islands that are directly in the path of the proposed Delta Tunnels project, eliminating eminent domain concerns for that portion of tunnels construction," she said. "We believe that having MWD as a neighbor is an existential threat to the future of the Delta and Delta communities."

Metropolitan officials have said they want to use the land for habitat for fish and wildlife. Environmental concerns over fish and wildlife have been a barrier to shipping water from the Delta to Southern California.

Contact Denis Cuff at 925-943-8267. Follow him at [Twitter.com/deniscuff](https://twitter.com/deniscuff).



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By Wes Bowers

January 24, 2016 5:08PM

## Use of Delta land after proposed sale to be discussed

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STOCKTON — With news of the potential sale of four islands in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta to a Southern California water agency, county officials are looking to put an ordinance in place that will give them time to determine what land uses will be consistent with the county's general plan.

The San Joaquin County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday will consider adopting an interim urgency ordinance that would prohibit the flooding of agricultural land in the Delta in manners considered inconsistent with common practice.

If adopted Tuesday, the ordinance would take effect immediately and last 45 days, and might be extended for as many as 22 months and 15 days.

During that time, the San Joaquin County Community Development Department and County Counsel would study the potential impacts of converting large tracts of Delta land to wildlife habitats.

San Joaquin County Counsel Mark Myles said the intent of the ordinance is not to dictate what current or potential property owners will be able to do with the Delta islands.

"The intent is that when somebody comes to us with an intended land use, we'll want to take a look at that use," Myles said.

The urgency ordinance comes as the county learned in September that Delta Wetlands Properties intended to sell four islands in the Delta totaling 20,000 acres.

At the time, Westlands Water District of Fresno and the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, based in Los Angeles, both discussed purchasing the properties.

Westlands representatives later said the district most likely would not make an offer.

Bob Muir, spokesman for MWD, said it is unknown when his agency might put an official offer to purchase the land. He also said the agency has not set a land use intent if it were to purchase the property.

"There are a number of encumbrances on the property that need to be addressed (by Delta Wetlands), so we're still in the process of exploring that acquisition," he said.

In July 2013, supervisors approved a settlement agreement with Delta Wetlands Properties that allowed the latter to proceed with a project to convert Bacon Island and Webb Tract — which total 11,000 acres — to reservoirs for water storage.

The water stored in the reservoirs would be delivered south through the Central Valley and into Southern California, according to Tuesday's agenda.

The agreement also allowed portions of Bouldin Island and Holland Tract — which total 9,000 acres — to be used for wildlife habitat conservation, and other portions to remain agricultural lands, staff said.

In recent weeks, San Joaquin County staff has heard rumors that MWD intends to use the property for flooded wildlife habitat conservation, and not a water storage project originally proposed by Delta Wetlands.

Myles said the county doesn't have set parameters for habitat flooding, and the ordinance will give them time to determine what those are.

"There is so much that's unknown," he said. "This is just a preventative measure meant to say that if (a preserve) is the intent (of your land use), then we're going to take a look at it and determine if it's appropriate there."

Common flooding practices for agricultural uses in the Delta have included periodic flooding for crops such as rice, Myles said, as well as seasonal flooding for duck hunting clubs.

These kinds of flooding practices will still be allowed under the ordinance, according to Tuesday's staff report.

Tuesday's meeting begins at 9 a.m. at 44 N. San Joaquin St., Sixth Floor, in Stockton.

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